

THE GIRLFRIEND

Afterwards she liked chocolate.
I'd look at her, then push the covers off me.
Drop to the floor from the second bunk. Find
something to put on, search my desk for quarters.

The fluorescent lights in the hall were always on.
I had to let my eyes adjust before I could take the steps
down to the lobby. I usually went barefoot —
the halls were warm but the steps were cold.
Then, in the lobby, it was warm again.

I always wondered if anyone could tell. I wondered
what I looked like, if there were signs
I should know about. I made sure to check
if anyone noticed me.
I'd walk slowly to the machine, look over
my choices behind the glass, get one or two.

Then, after a final look around,
take the steps back to the room.
Sometimes when I returned I'd notice
the light coming out from under the door.
And always, when I stepped in,
she was dressed and ready to leave.

THE GEESE

The geese flew away in the night.
I know because I heard them.
When it happened, I was in bed. Even though
there was nothing to see, I opened my eyes.
I stared up into darkness. Outside,
far above, they were navigating the black sky.
I just lay there, listening.

Each call separate but part of one
succession of calls. One sheet of sound.
I swear I could hear their wings beat.
Displacing each moment, troubling the cold air.

It took only a short while
for them to leave. And now they've gone,
there are no days. The geese took them.
All that's left is rain. Wet asphalt
and muddied grass. The next morning
there was no morning and the geese were gone.
They flew away in the night,
calling to each other in darkness.